

or two questions of some difficulty
which have ~~some~~ immediate practical
importance at the present moment,
and as to which you have not pronounced
a ^{decent} opinion in your recent article
in Silliman's Journal - You are aware
that a new edition of Steudel's nomenclator
is now being prepared by Mr Dayman
Jackson Secretary to the Linnean Soc^t.
Mr Jackson is next to nothing as a botanist
but a painstaking man with a taste
for bibliographical research and, I dare
say, will do his work well - but he properly
feels that he is not the man to decide
difficult questions - After a little
preliminary discussion it is I believe
settled that a small committee (of which
I am to be one) is to consider & endeavour
to solve the difficulties

The first has been for some time
preparing, but ^{its urgency} has been very greatly
increased by the publication of the
Genera plantarum - and under
the general heading come several
special cases.

10 Southwell Gardens London SW
Christmas day 1883

My dear Dr Gray

I will not let this day go by
without sending our best greetings
and good wishes to you & Mrs Gray
with the hope that we may meet
you both in the course of next year.
I suppose that you adhere to
your project of going to Mexico
in February & as the season
advances working up northward
along the west side of the continent -
For my part I have a positive longing
to see your Pacific region & should
think myself too fortunate if I
could find myself there in your
company - But intense as is my
desire to accomplish it I fear that
the difficulties are too great. My wife's
health is not strong - even our short

journeys in Europe fatigue her very much and it is quite out of the question her undertaking a journey to the far west, while on the other hand she cannot bear the idea of my again going so far & being as she says out of reach in case I were laid up. She has offered to cross the Atlantic with me & to remain in some quiet sea-side place on the Atlantic side - if indeed there be such a thing as a quiet place in your go-a-head country -

But on my side I cannot see my way to leaving her so far from home in a strange place - even though to us there is little or no difference between the U. States & England. If it were possible for one of my sons to cross the Atlantic at the same time the case would

be different - but of that there is little chance - It is more likely that I shall resign myself to crossing a few weeks before the meeting of the Brit. Association at Montreal, & seeing something of the vegetation of the Atlantic States. I suppose that a visit to the White Mountains in New Hampshire will not be without interest and I dare say that you can recommend me to some botanical friend ^{at Cambridge} who would direct me how to use a short time to the best advantage.

But in any case I shall be anxious to know how to communicate with you during your journey & as I suppose you will have some letters forwarded from Cambridge I shall be glad to know how to secure that mine may be among the number. -

I am anxious to know your views

will agree that the multiplication of *Synonyms* has already become the plague & opprobrium of Natural History - & will grow worse if effective means be not found to arrest it. Experience shows that good advice is no check - there is nothing to prevent any ignoramus not only from publishing as his own all the species transferred from one genus to another by B. & H. ~~for~~ but further from coining new specific names for each of them, unless botanists agree to recognize the absolute claim of the older specific name -

I shall be much indebted to you if you will put your opinion on these points on paper - a separate slip which if you allow it I may show to others - Perhaps Hooker has written to you on the subject. I don't think you will agree altogether with him -

I have seen Bentham to day - extremely weak - confined to one floor - his head clear but fearing the least exertion - He may rally a little but the sand is nearly run out. With my wife's kindest remembrances & good wishes for you & Mrs Gray

Always sincerely yours

John Ball

I quite agree with you as to the names of natural orders & tribes in the Gen. *Plantaeum* but it is now too late -

Where ^{a genus} *Geocrypta* previously admitted is ~~now~~ united to some other ^{old} *Geocrypta* previously established, how are you to cite the names of the species of which it is composed. Take for example the species of *Ligularia* united by B. & H. to *Senecio* - & a species *L. mongolica* D.C. of which the specific name has not been preoccupied. I admit all that A. Belaudolle says - we must not make B. & H. say what they have not said - & write *Senecio mongolicus* B. & H. - But on the other hand there is something preposterous in proposing that in this ^{in Jackson} and hundreds, nay thousands, of similar cases ^{he} should be instructed to write *S. mongolicus* D. Jackson, when in nine cases out of ten Mr D. Jackson ^{would} not know the species or the genus if he saw it, and where the entry in the new Steudel would not refer the reader to any work in which he would find the plant under that name. The question is whether any alternative course may not be found - In spite of all that has been urged against lengthening the name - and the fact that the name of a plant is a binomial consisting of the name of a genus & that of a species - I continue to think that the least inconvenience will be found in citing (within brackets) the name of the first describer of the species, with or without the name of the genus to which he referred it. This plant was first named *Cineraria mongolica* by Turczaninow then *Lig. mongolica* D.C. in Prod. I would write *Senecio mongolicus* (Turcz.) or *Senecio Cineraria*.

Now take another case in the same genus
Ligularia amplexicaulis DC - It happens
in this case that Wallich after first calling it
Senecio called it *Senecio amplex.* in his Catalogue
but the difficulty arises in another way

Both C B Clarke (*Compos. Indica*) & Hooker in
H. Brit. Ad. have overlooked the fact that

there is an older species *S. amplexicaulis* H.B.K.
What then is to be done with Wallich's plant.
A new name becomes a necessity - I suppose
there is nothing for it but to trust to the
discretion of Mr Jackson -

There is a third way of escape but one which
I should not venture to propose, though
there is much to be said for it - & that is in
large genera with sections that have been
regarded as genera by reputable authors to make
the name a trinomial - & say *Senecio ligularia*
amplexicaulis D.C. and *Senecio Peruvianus*
amplexicaulis H.B.K. I think the introduction
of new names for old plants i.e. plants well
known by existing names so serious an
evil that it shd not be incurred unless the
necessity is stringent - we must face the fact
that the mass of material is so great & the
strain on the memory already so serious
that we must not shrink from even a
daring novelty if it will promote the ends of

Science

- I think that where ~~is~~ a monotypic
genus of a previous author has been
incorporated in a larger one - although
the specific name has not been mentioned
the ~~same~~ implication is so clear that
unless you adopt the suggestion of giving
the first describer of the species in brackets
you may properly give that of the author
of the generic classification

Thus I would write *Mesogramma apifolium*
DC. either *Senecio apifolius* (DC. *Mesogramma*)
or *S. apifolius* B.H -

A second difficulty in nomenclature nearly
allied to the first has not I think been
adequately met - and urgently requires a positive
decision - What specific name should
be adopted where a plant has been placed
by different genera under different specific
names? To save place I will refer you to two
very short papers of mine in the London Journal of
Botany - New Series Vol VI (1877) p. 357 &
Vol VII (1878) p. 140 - The question is whether
the rule of applying the older specific name
(when not open to objections easily defined) in
every case, both as to the past & future publications
should be uniformly applied - I think you